

Norwich Congregational Church (sometimes called South
Norwich (On the Green) Church)
Windsor County
Vermont

HABS No. VT-53

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

ADDENDUM
FOLLOWS...

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Eastern Office, Division of Design and Construction
143 South Third Street
Philadelphia 6, Pa.

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HABS No. VT-53

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

NORWICH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

(Sometimes called South Church)

Location: Norwich (On the Green), Windsor County, Vermont.

Present Owner: Norwich Congregational Church.

Present Occupant: The owner.

Present Use: Church.

Brief Statement
of Significance:

This building is an example of an 1817 meeting house in a small, rural village, rather elegant for the period in this area and setting. The building figured in a contest between the settlements of Norwich Center and Norwich Plain for dominance in the Town of Norwich.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Original and subsequent owner: Norwich Congregational Church, originally called South Congregational Church.
2. Date of dedication: November 20, 1817.
3. Architect: The building is locally attributed to Ammi Burnham Young, Architect from the nearby Lebanon, New Hampshire, who later became Supervising Architect of the U. S. Treasury Department. There is no documentation for this attribution to Young who was born June 19, 1798 and would have been only 19 years old at the time of the dedication of the church. It seems unlikely that any contribution Young might have made to the building of the church could have been important.
4. Notes on alterations and additions: The building was moved a few hundred feet to its present site in 1853 and the length was increased by the addition of one bay. The interior was redecorated in 1908; the side galleries were removed at the first bay only, creating a transept

effect at the front of the church; the pulpit was remodelled; and the wall back of the pulpit redecorated. A modern Parish house has been added to the rear.

5. References

- a. Philip Aylwin White and Dana Doane Johnson, Hugh S. Morrison, editor, Early Houses of Norwich, Vermont (Hanover, New Hampshire: Dartmouth College, 1938), 38-40, fig. 52 & 53.
- b. Old Buildings Project of the Robert Hull Fleming Museum at the University of Vermont, Burlington, 1937-1938.
- c. Osmund R. Overby, "Ammi B. Young in the Connecticut Valley," Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians, vol. XIX, no. 3 (October, 1960), pp. 119-123.

B. Historical Events Connected with the Structure: The building of this church figured in a contest between the settlements of Norwich Center (since disappeared) and Norwich Plain (now known simply as Norwich) for dominance in the Town of Norwich. The original church was located at Norwich Center, but a group favouring the development of the southern settlement, Norwich Plain, built this church in 1817 as part of their campaign to increase the importance of the southern village in the town. The group of people who began worshipping in the South Church organized the South Congregational Church, June 19, 1819. The people in the northern part of town around Norwich Center refused to give up their church, however; so for several years, there were two congregations in the Town of Norwich. The settlement at Norwich Center gradually declined and finally disappeared, and eventually their church building was sold and razed.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural Character: This building is an example of an 1817 meeting house in a small, rural village, rather elegant for the period in this area and setting. This church is unusual for having kept its original two story high interior with galleries around the back and both sides. This typical scheme was altered in nearly

every contemporary meeting house in this area c. 1830-1850 by the addition of a floor at the gallery level dividing the building into upper and lower floors.

2. Condition of the Fabric: The building is sound and well maintained.

B. Technical Description of Exterior

1. General Layout: Large rectangular building with portico and tower at the front or south end and parish house in modern ells at the rear.
2. Foundations: Large, cut, granite blocks.
3. Wall construction: Timber frame. Flush siding in pediments and within portico, clapboard on other surfaces.
4. Portico: Ionic, tetrastyle portico with wider intercolumniation at the center bay than at the end bays. Blind, three-center arch light in pediment. French style Ionic capitals with angular volutes.
5. Chimneys: One brick chimney.
6. Openings
 - a. Doorways and doors: Front doors in portico; two leaf, three panel center door in doorway with paired pilasters and moulded entablature. Single leaf, three panel doors flank center door set in simple, moulded frames. Modern door on new parish house in rear.
 - b. Windows and shutters: Palladian window over entrance door within portico, round headed center window with narrow wing windows, set in pilastered frame. Fixed slat shutters. 12/12 light double-hung windows in simple moulded frames.
7. Roof
 - a. Shape, covering: Gabled roof, shingled.
 - b. Cornice, eaves: Boxed cornice, moulded wood trim, drilled mutules, beaded bed moulding. Typical

cornice continues on horizontal and raking cornices of pedimented, gable ends.

8. Tower: Three story, wood frame tower plus spire. First story: square plan; framed, clapboarded structure; clock faces on three sides; cornice with moulded trim and modillions; surmounted by balustrade with square corner posts, turned balusters, moulded handrail. Second story: open octagonal belfry; Doric pilaster strips folded around corners; simple moulded cornice with modillions; surmounted by balustrade with paneled corner posts, heavily moulded rail and lattice in place of balusters. Third story: octagonal plan; louvered openings; flat Ionic pilasters folded around corners; simple moulded cornice. Tower surmounted by a tall, shingled spire, octagonal in plan, with gilded weather vane.

C. Technical Description of Interior

1. Floor plans: Shallow narthex leads to large auditorium with galleries. Various rooms, offices and parish house beyond the auditorium.
2. Stairways: Two stairways in the narthex lead to the galleries.
3. Flooring: Wood, partly carpeted.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Plaster, painted.
5. Doorways and doors: Four-panelled doors in simple, moulded frames.
6. Trim: Ornamental wood membering of the pulpit wall dates from 1908. Original interior trim includes simple, moulded window frames, panelled gallery railing, and Ionic wood columns which support the gallery.
7. Hardware: Some original wrought iron hardware, mostly replaced.
8. Lighting: Electric.
9. Heating: Modern central heating.

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D. Site

1. General setting and orientation: The structure faces south on the north side of the village green.
2. Landscaping: Informal with lawn and trees.

Prepared by Henry C. Edwards and
Osmund R. Overby, Architects,
National Park Service - September
1959.

ADDENDUM
FOLLOWS...

Addendum to:

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Data pages 1 through 5 were previously transmitted to the Library of Congress. This is data page 6.

INVENTORY OF PHOTOGRAMMETRIC IMAGES

The glass photogrammetric plates listed below are not reproducible except with special permission. However, reference prints and film copy negatives have been made from the plates indicated by an asterisk (*) and are included in the Library of Congress collection of formal HABS/HAER photographs.

- 8 4" x 6" glass plate negatives (4 stereopairs) and
- 2 4" x 6" glass plate diapositives (one stereopair) produced by Perry E. Borchers of the Ohio State University in 1959.

One survey control contact print from each plate; survey control information for each pair.

LC-HABS-GS07-T-1116-700L

EAST ELEVATION
(Negative)

LC-HABS-GS07-T-1116-700R *

EAST ELEVATION
(Negative)

Left and right overlap: 85%

LC-HABS-GS07-T-1116-701L

SOUTH ELEVATION
(Negative)

LC-HABS-GS07-T-1116-701R *

SOUTH ELEVATION
(Negative)

Left and right overlap: 85%

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|-----------------------------|--|
| LC-HABS-GS07-T-1116-702L * | NE CORNER, ANGLE (Negative) |
| LC-HABS-GS07-T-1116-702R | NE CORNER, ANGLE (Negative) |
| Left and right overlap: 85% | |
| LC-HABS-GS07-T-1116-703L * | EAST PORCH--ELEVATION (Diapositive) |
| LC-HABS-GS07-T-1116-703R | EAST PORCH--ELEVATION (Diapositive) |
| Left and right overlap: 95% | |
| LC-HABS-GS07-T-1116-704L * | SE CORNER, ANGLE (Negative) |
| LC-HABS-GS07-T-1116-704R | SE CORNER, ANGLE (Negative) |
| Left and right overlap: 65% | |

PROJECT INFORMATION STATEMENT

Photogrammetric images were incorporated into the HABS/HAER collections in the summers of 1985 and 1986. Inventories of the images were compiled and filed as data pages for each structure recorded. Since the glass photogrammetric plates are not reproducible except with special permission, a reference print and film copy negative were made from one plate of each stereopair and from the most informative plates in sequential sets. The reference prints and copy negatives were then incorporated into the formal HABS/HAER photograph collections.

The Photogrammetric Images Project was a cooperative endeavor between the HABS/HAER Division of the National Park Service and the Prints and Photographs Division of the Library of Congress. The reference prints and film copy negatives of the original plates were made by the Library of Congress Photoduplication Service with funds provided by the Library of Congress Flat Film Preservation Fund. Additional reproductions were made by HABS/HAER. The project was supervised by HABS/HAER Architect John A. Burns, AIA, and completed by HABS Historians Jeanne C. Lawrence (University of London) in 1985 and Caroline R. Alderson (Columbia University) in 1986.